



the RARA RAG

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NO. 8

VHF And VHF Contesting At The April RARA Meeting

Peter Fournia, W2SKY

The topic at our April 6th meeting is best summarized by Mark Hoffman's (K2AXX) email: "We are on for April — Myself and N2JMH (Jim Howard) will be teaming up to talk about VHF, VHF Contesting and ROVING! Jim is our famous rover, who travels around with a 30' tower on top of his van, with 300w on 2 meters! He's got some interesting stories to tell."

Mark and Jim are active members of the Rochester VHF Group. RVHFG is the hotbed of amateur VHF, UHF and microwave expertise in Rochester. One of the most popular activities is the ARRL's VHF Sweepstakes in late January. This is the grand daddy of VHF contesting that brings insanity to VHF contest enthusiasts. The Rochester, NY area is one of the most radioactive hot spots during this period radiating RF energy from 50 MHz to light. Those of us conveniently operating on FM are clearly aware that much more is happening on the VHF bands. We hear the rover contacts in FN 2,3,12,13,14,22,23 grid squares. We also hear QSY arrangements planned for 50 MHz, 220, 440, 900, 1.5 Gig frequencies. The familiar question arises. Who are those guys?

Here is your chance to find out. Our speakers, Mark and Jim are two of those "wild and crazy guys". They will be addressing our curiosity about this high-energy activity with pictures and stories about the VHF+ bands.

Mark will focus on the VHF bands, their characteristics and uniqueness as he steps from 50 MHz to light. He will address what we can expect from VHF+ operation... things like, propagation, band-by-band comparisons of distance & activity. Mark will cover some typical equipment you'd find at Hamfests that can get you on the weak-signal segments. What is VHF contesting like, outside the FM only categories?

Jim will focus on roving with description of equipment, preparations and stories of operating in the corners of those remote grid squares. How do you get 6-8 VHF + bands operational in a van? Can

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Hamfest Programs – Part III

Lloyd R. Caves, WB2EFU

The end of March and the first of April should mark the end of any more snow, or at least any major accumulation. April Fools Day does have its advantages and most of us have seen enough of the white stuff for this season. Along with the nicer weather we are now just two months away from the largest Hamfest in the area. The Rochester Hamfest/ Atlantic Division Convention, which will be held at the Dome on June 1, 2, and 3, is brought to you by RARA. Make sure to support your club's activities by attending the Hamfest.

As part of the Hamfest activities the Awards Banquet is to be held Friday evening at the Marriott Hotel on West Henrietta Road. Awards will be given for The Ham Of The Year and Technical Achievement for the ARRL Atlantic Division. It is time to nominate the person or persons that you would like to receive these awards. For further information and nomination forms contact Bill Edgar, N3LLR, Atlantic Division Vice-Director. Order your banquet tickets in advance so that you can enjoy the evening's festivities.

In the past two months this column has listed some of the programs that will be taking place during the Hamfest. The following is the remainder of the programs that you can enjoy:

VHF Forum:

The Rochester VHF Group is proud to sponsor the 1st "VHF Boot Camp", with discussions on Basic VHF Propagation, Transverters vs. Transceivers for VHF operation, Satellite Operation and even a

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RARA Meeting

April 6, 2001

Henrietta Fire Hall,
3129 E. Henrietta Rd.

VHF And VHF Contesting

Presented by
Mark Hoffman, K2AXX And
Jim Howard, N2JMH

the RARA RAG

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PSK Fun At RARA Hamfest

Peter Fournia, W2SKY

The Rochester Amateur Packet Society (RAPS) will operate a PSK station during the Rochester Hamfest. Visitors may try their hand at operating this popular HF mode. The station will be located inside the Dome Arena and operated on 20 meters. Bill Hopkins, AA2YV, will deliver a presentation on PSK31 on Saturday, June 2nd from 3:30 to 4:30 PM.

RAPS is looking for operators to keep the station up during the peak Hamfest hours. Operators do not have to be familiar with PSK. It's a great time to be introduced to it. After a brief intro many people can enjoy a keyboard-to-keyboard QSO. It will be interesting to see how many states and countries are logged during the period.

We ask that you express your interest and willingness to take 1 or 2 one-hour time slots on the Hamfest weekend. The operator schedule will be posted on the RAPS website at <http://www.ggw.org/raps/>. You do not need a license with HF privileges! You can help RAPS a lot by just tuning and listening with the equipment. We encourage deaf people to participate even without a ham license. Non-hams can transmit from the station if an appropriate control operator is present.

Please signup via the website or by talking to Jack Tripp at 381-7757 or message him at n2snl@arrl.net. Signing up now will greatly help RAPS provide an interesting and dynamic demonstration of PSK to hams and non-hams. Thank you.

RARA License Classes

Norm Turner, WB2LQB

Despite the inclement weather of March 5th, the RARA License classes were held at the Monroe County Social Services building at 111 Westfall Road. All classes are continuing on schedule working toward a May 14, 2001 test session.

Thanks to all connected with this project.

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RARA Rag 20 Years Ago, April 1981

Ed Gable, K2MP

The April Meeting was Old Timer's Night with Bruce Kelley, W2ICE, RARA's Historian and co-founder of the Antique Wireless Association, presenting a slide show on the history of RARA. This was made even more special as this was RARA's 50th anniversary. Otto Bluntzer, WB2RJB, was RARA's 1981 Field Day Chairman, along with Don Drennon, W2EBF. Otto urged members to sign up for a series of planning meetings and working sessions to build dipoles and the like. This issue also saw the announcement of a reorganized Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP, formally Civil Defense) under the direction of General Edward Smith, with newly appointed Steve Gulack, N2DZS, as Communications Officer. An OEP - RARA liaison committee has been formed headed by Ed Holdsworth, N2EH. Mr. Pete Chaston, Director of the National Weather Service in Rochester, urged members to support the WX Bureau by becoming WX spotters and could contact the Monroe County Emergency Coordinator, George Negus, K2OIU, if interested. This program would later turn into the Nationally recognized *SkyWarn* system. A new Six Meter FM repeater came on the air on 53.6 MHz as W2TR/R. Planned Public Service events for 1981 included the STPR road rally, Mendon Pony Club Rally, National Sports Festival, Scotch Bonnett Boat race and Canaltown Days. A new group of YL's has been organized under the leadership of Lia Zwack, WA2NFY. Called SAYLARC, they are the Second Area Young Ladies Amateur Radio Club, with nets on 75 and 40 meters. Dwight Hill, K2KWK, wrote a nice article entitled *Why I Like CW*. A new advertiser was Norm Webb, K2PPO, offering Amateur and Commercial radio repair service. From the Want Ads you could buy a Heath SB-101, power supply, mic and key for \$250 from Bruce Frank, KA2EFR.

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Made In Rochester Radio History

Allan Pellnat, KX2H

This is an open invitation to everyone to come see the new "Made in Rochester" exhibit at the Antique Wireless Association's Electronic Communication Museum in Bloomfield, NY.

Did you know that there were more than a dozen Rochester based companies engaged in the manufacture of receivers and components before WW II? Did you know that Stromberg Carlson made trench telegraph sets for the U.S. Army Signal Corps right here in Rochester during WW I? Where was Rochester's "Radio Row" in the early days? Do you, as most people seem to, think that WHAM was Rochester's first broadcast station? You'll rethink that one after seeing this display. Have you ever heard of Mellaphone Co.? They started in 1929 and were still in business here in the late 70's.

Dig through your junk box and see if you have a "Straitline" variable capacitor made in Rochester in the mid 20's. They were advertised in nationally circulated radio magazines of the day. Or how about a pair of headphones made by a small metal stamping company called Cel-Met in the late 20's that is still in business here today. Ernest Mignon made receivers in Elmira before WW I and set up operations in Rochester after the war. Do you have some of his transformers or variable capacitors buried in your parts box?

The museum opens for the season on May 6th, Sundays only in May 2-5 PM. Then from June through September Saturdays 2-4 PM and Sundays 2-5 PM. October is Sundays only again.

NEXT RAG DEADLINE APRIL 13, 2001



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This BC-348 Will Take Time

Bill Hopkins, AA2YV

My motto at Hamfests and fleamarkets is: if it's new, I don't have the money, and if it's a fleamarket item, well then, I've got to let others have a crack at it first. And no regrets.

That purchase the year before at the AWA Annual Conference had been thrust on me. No one was left to lovingly flip the knobs of the BC-348 receiver and offer the seller a price. And the fifteen bucks I paid for it could be put (read: "hidden") in the miscellaneous column of our family budget.

It had fired up and received fine, as you know, but it was now in pieces in the basement. Where to start? I had to get this project done before November, because I didn't want to wear my coat and hat down there.

First, with all those parts lying around — some neatly lined up for months along the basement wall — I had to have a system. I had received a schematic and a modification booklet from a good friend, Jack Wannewetsch, W2FKU, so I reconnoitered the tube lineup and the mods. It had the PS, an extra audio amp with a 6C4, an S-meter circuit with a 6C4 and a battered up crystal calibrator hanging off the back.

After repainting the box with black crackle paint — I'd protected the original red and yellow production stamps — I began on the radio proper. Hmmm...

As we all usually do, I grabbed a piece of blank typing paper and began writing down my repair "wish list": to ID each mod; to establish the big mystery resistor's function, a 50K-er; to identify all loosened wiring (by me) and reconnect; to rebuild each mod with new parts; and a lot of other little "to-do's."

But into the process it became clear: I would have to write down every single action I took and even write out my suspicions about things. Thus: "What did this plug-in (white + blue) on back-added-bracket (next to the added earphones (?) plug) function as? It seems that these 2 connections plugged into the xtal osc. added on back." OR: "Go back to page 5 + look at the schematic around the minitube 6C4 (?) under the chassis and the "S" meter. It seems that he [the original modifying fella] took the tap off for the S meter from a small plate (pin 4) of

the 2nd Det., 3rd I.F. to power the S meter and not from the screen grid of the 2nd IF. (pin3?). He took the tap off one stage later!" Of course, I drew out all the schismos of the mods and compared them with the early 50's suggestions.

I decided I should put all the caps and resistors of the different mods on one PC board and plop it into the only useable void under the chassis. Tracing and retracing his and my steps ate up two weekends, at least. Heck, isn't this what the fun's all about anyway?

I really can't tell you everything about the reassembly. That would be like a mystic hermit explaining to an errant vagabond the finer points of the *unio mystica*.

I kept on writing my notes, explaining *why* I had to retrace my steps, *when* the tuning gears would

have to be resealed; *where* I could take off a B+ if ever required, and *what* I would have to revisit: for one, that bedangled S-meter circuit. All in all I had twelve — count them — twelve pages of notes and schismos.

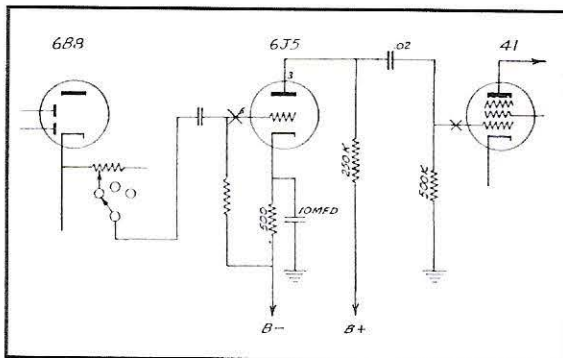
And now my BC-348R works! The escutcheon lights go on! It has that ever-loving backlash on the frequency dial. And I even discovered a tone control the guy had added.

From time to time I would load up the receiver and take it down to the AWA guys and get some valuable help from them, "OJT," as Mani Pires likes to say. Ed Gable (K2MP) and George Platteter (AA2FO) dip into their knowledge and wisdom from time to time.

And so, with it all put back together, I present it to the boys this last December, and get a grade. "Yup, that's AC. But don't worry about that little hum," Ed says. "These things weren't meant to work around AC anyway."

And when Stan Avery (WM3D) sees the 348, he fairly flies into post ecstatic caress syndrome: "Don't leave that thing around here, you hear? Cause when you get back from lunch, it won't be here. Did you know the 348 was my first receiver and I listened to it for hours as a boy?" Well Stan, I really feel for you, but this thing's going back into the trunk of my car.

With the receiver's brass front handles and screw heads now shined up, it looks like a million bucks, and I'll have to rebuild the shelf on the shack table to fit it in. I bet you visitors won't even notice my new Heathkit gear. They'll just Uuuuu and Aaaaa about that bomber radio.



The BC348's Additional Audio Stage
The Added Stage Is Inserted Between The
Two "X" Marks

DX/Contesting Report

Ed Gable, K2MP

As we write this we hear that Chuck, 3YOC, is returning from Bouvet after a month or more of heroic efforts on the behalf of DX'ers everywhere. Chuck operated under severe conditions of weather, broken radios and minimal operating time due to his workload while on the island. At times Chuck could only get on for 5 minutes at a time to work just a few more. Our hats off to Chuck and the surprise of 2001 with the activation of a top ten most needed site.

In April there are a few nice DX entities and IOTA's planned. If you hear E29AL on the bands that will be Koh Tarutao Island, IOTA AS-126, counting as Thailand. Probably the most exciting spot will be Mellish Reef as VK9ML between April 21-24. This will be an expeditionary team surveying the Reef for a large effort later on. Another opportunity for those who missed Chesterfield Islands (DXCC's newest entity) on the first operations, can now try to grab F2CW and crew between April 24th and May 8th. The TX callsign is not known yet. Another April try is often traveled Pedro, HK3JJH, who will try to operate from Malpelo Islands (KH0) starting April 7th. Travel to this entity is always problematic and Pedro sometimes has trouble getting there.

Just a thought on QSL managers... tough job. None-the-less, kudos to the recent Syria operation, YK9A, with QSL manager K9LA who had these rare QSL's returned in nine days. And what's in a call-sign, well the ARRL just approved STOP as a credited operation, however SONY is a pirate!

Contests are winding down for the season and April finds the Japan Int'l DX CW contest April 13-15.

The April RDXA meeting is 7:30 PM on April 17th at 111 Westfall Road.

RagChew

Lloyd R. Caves, WB2EFU

It is getting near time to elect the club officers for next season. The Nominating Committee will be presenting a slate of well qualified candidates at the April meeting. Even though the Nominating Committee will do a good job of finding these candidates, they don't know everyone of our 600 plus members. That is why everyone has the opportunity to nominate people from the floor at both the April meeting and at the May meeting.

If you know someone that would do a good job as an Officer or Board Member talk to them before you nominate them from the floor. You wouldn't want to embarrass them and have them decline the nomination in front of everyone.

Most importantly plan on being at the May meeting and voting for your club leaders. Remember that they are the people to guide us for the next year.

Rochester Hamfest June 1, 2, And 3 2001



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By Phone

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On Website

www.ggw.org/rara/scholarship.htm

RARA RAG 5

Rochester VHF Group And Rochester DX Association Combined

Annual Awards Banquet

Burgundy Basin Inn

1361 Marsh Road, Pittsford

Sat. April 28, 2001

6:30 PM – Cash Bar, Appetizers

7:30 PM – Buffet Dinner

Tickets - \$20.00, Available from

Ed, K2MP; Irv, AF2K; and Paul, N2OWP

Hamfest Programs — continued from page 1

simple VHF Antenna Construction Demonstration! If you wondered what you could do on 50 MHz and above, this is the place to find out. Mark Hoffman, K2AXX, VHF Group Chairman will be coordinating this great program for you.

ARRL Forum:

This year Bernie Fuller, N3EFN, Atlantic Division Director and Bill Edgar, N3LLR, Atlantic Division Vice-Director will present ARRL Forum. Join them and other ARRL leaders to stay informed of what is taking place within the ARRL, the Atlantic Division, and the FCC. A lot of changes have taken place recently and this is a good place to be to stay informed, ask questions, and voice your opinion.

QRP:

Have you thought about joining the ranks of the QRPers that are out there? This is getting to be a very popular mode these days. Ed Hare, W1RFL, ARRL Lab Supervisor will speak about QRP operating and the "Tuna Tin 2 Today", the W1FB's low-power transmitter design from 1976.

Contesting In The Cabrillo Age:

Many changes are taking place in the contesting

world of today. Dan Henderson, N1ND, ARRL Contest Branch Manager will be with us to talk about these changes. This will be an overview of the changes undertaken in the ARRL Contest Branch over the past 2 years. This will include a look at the required Cabrillo file format for electronic entries, including the rationale behind it and how its implementation is affecting contesting. Also, there will be a brief review of the status of the Contest Advisory Committee's current project on re-evaluation of the Affiliated Club Competition.

W2"Ruf and Ready" Code Proficiency Tests:

These code proficiency tests will be given by Kevin T. Kedzierski, WA2FKV, Special Events Coordinator for the Radio Association of WNY. A beautiful four color certificate (see picture below) will be given to those participants who copy at least one perfect minute at 7.5 WPM or more showing the date and speed achieved.

Next month's issue will outline the days, times, and locations of all the programs taking place this year. Whether you attend one or all the programs, your Hamfest Committee hopes to see everyone at the Hamfest enjoying themselves. This includes the Awards Banquet.

Radio Association of Western New York

Morse Code

W2"RUF 'n READY"

Proficiency



Has, on this day June 5, 1999, at the Rochester Hamfest demonstrated the ability to copy the International Morse Code for one full minute without error, at least seven and one half words per minute. Subsequential increases in levels of code speed shown, prove that this "CW OPERATOR" means business, always improving CW skills in the true CLARA REGER spirit.

Clara Reger, W2RUF 1898-1980

"Say it in code or don't say it"

Award No. 001
Not Valid unless sealed

K. J. L. WA2FKV
RAWNY Test Administrator

Morse Code Proficiency Certificate To Be Given In Honor And Memory Of
Clara Reger, W2RUF

April RARA Meeting — *continued from page 1*

you really operate them all from Watertown, Syracuse, Wellsville and Leroy in one wintry weekend? Anyone who has tried to operate multi-bands from just the Leroy Grid Square can relate to the special consideration of this insane accomplishment.

You can get a preview of the topic by visiting the RVHFG website at <http://vhfgroup.rochesterny.org/>. Some of the pictures and stories are located in their online newsletters.

By the way, presentation of the VHF contest awards will occur at the joint RVHFG/RDXA banquet on April 28th. Results of the many contest categories will be awarded including winner of the coveted club award, the Rochester Cup.

Join us at our April 6th RARA meeting and feel the excitement of VHF+ operation. It is at 8:00 PM in the Henrietta Fire Hall, 3129 East Henrietta Rd.

Historical Bits

Ed Gable, K2MP

- 1917 - Amateurs forced off the air due to World War 1
- 1937 - ARRL Announces DXCC Program
- 1958 - September, Amateurs lost 11 meters, Class D Citizens Band Opens

SILENT KEYS

Wesley A. Jackling, W2YUT
February 18, 2001

A. Leland Zwack, W2WPF
March 4, 2001

RARA Family Picnic
June 16, 2001

Creekside Cabin
Ellison Park

FOR SALE: HF Transceiver. Full band coverage, multi-mode, General Coverage receiver, built-in electronic keyer, microphone and power supply. Perfect operating condition and true plug and play. ICOM 751A. \$425.00 Ed Gable K2MP, 392-3088 or k2mp@eznet.net

RARA Amateur Radio License Testing

**All Elements Needed
To Complete a License
Class**

**Saturday
April 21, 2001**

**Registration - 8:30AM
Testing - 9:00AM**

**Social Services Building
111 Westfall Rd., Rochester**

**Inquires (716) 334-4488
aa2fo@rpa.net**

PUBLIC SERVIC SCHEDULE

R.E. Ginna Radiological Pre Drill
May 2, 2001

R.E. Ginna Radiological Drill
June 6, 2001

Tour de Cure
June 9, 2001

Stuart Horse Trials
July 28, 2001

Walnut Hill Carriage Show
August 15-20, 2001

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